

The Athenian Mercury.

Quest. 1. **VV**HY was Linsey-Woolsey forbidden to be used by the Jews under the Law?

Ans. Though 'tis probable there might be some farther End in most of the Injunctions of the Ceremonial Law, than trying their Obedience, or typifying our Saviour, yet what those Ends might be we can only now guess at.— Many things might be enjoined, as learned Men have thought, on purpose to keep the Jews from symbolizing with the Heathen round about 'em, whose Idolatries they were so much inclin'd to.— This of Linsey Woolsey, 'tis the general Opinion, was to represent unto 'em that Simplicity and Integrity which they ought to shew forth in their Conversations:— That their Lives ought to be of a piece, without any Double-dealing, Hypocrisie, or Deceit.— But what if we should add a Guess of our own on this Subject? Perhaps their being forbidden to wear a Garment made of Linnen and Woollen, was to typifie to 'em, or put 'em in mind of the Care they ought to take, not to marry strange Wives, of the Heathen about 'em, thereby making a kind of a Party-colour'd Family, their Children, as those of the Captivity, speaking half the Jewish, and the other half some other Language.

Quest. 2. Why the Jews made their Idols in the shape of a Calf, rather than any other Beast?

Ans. No doubt they learnt it in Egypt, where the Worship of an Ox or Calf was notoriously practis'd.

Quest. 3. Whether our Knowledge in our future Estate will be gradual?

Ans. It will certainly be so before the Day of Judgment; for till then we can't so much as properly know our selves, nor what Happiness we shall have in the Union of Soul and Body. But after the general Judgment, Consummation of all things, and our last highest Bliss in Heaven, it will very well admit a Question whether, though the Essence of that Happiness will be the same, the Degrees thereof may not be augmented, both in Love, Joy, Satisfaction and Knowledge; one of which must augment on the increase of the other:— And we think it not at all improbable, that these shall really augment.— God is an infinite Object,— that which is finite, though never so refin'd and advanc'd in its Nature, can't know God altogether, nay, can never know him all; we think it therefore fair arguing, that our Knowledge of him there must be successive, our Capacity still augmenting with our Knowledge, as our Happiness with both.— Take another not improbable Argument for the same Head:— In Heaven we shall be *ἰσχυρότεροι*,— like the Angels:— Their Knowledge is gradual, for they look into the Church, to learn the Mysteries thereof, even though in Heaven: And why then may not ours be so too, if e'er we are so happy by God's Grace to get thither?

Quest. 4. Whether Adam was a Giant? If not, from whence did that Race proceed, and where did it terminate?

Ans. Had Adam been a Giant, it follows not, all his Race must have been so too to all Generations; for then all the World had been so:—Nay, rather none had been so; for a Giant is a Monster for Greatness, as a Dwarf for Littleness.— But had there been any of such a size as Men are now, they must have been Dwarfs, only in respect of the rest.— But still the Doubt remains,— whence did the Race of Giants proceed, and where did it terminate?— We answer,— If the Hebrew word, we translate Giant, be taken in that Sense wherein we commonly use the English one, as we are inclin'd to believe, their Race might proceed from Persons of ordinary Bulk and Stature, as we see in those few Giants we have now in the World:— And if one, why not many? For the Terminating of this Race, it ended in the Flood, as to a Constancy, though accidentally we afterwards read of others who were like 'em, more frequently in the Ages immediately succeeding the Flood, &c. and sometimes, as has been said, even in our own.

Quest. 5. Is the Pope Antichrist?

Ans. If he be n't Antichrist himself, he's vilely like him; though we mean not so much one single Man, as the whole Policy and Hierarchy of Rome. We have had above twenty Archbishops and Bishops of the Church of England, since the Reformation, who have expressly asserted that Rome is Babylon, and the Pope Antichrist. And the Homilies themselves do not obscurely intimate the same. 'Tis the avow'd Faith

of all the Foreign Protestant Churches, and has been so in all Ages: The poor Waldenses, the Bohemians, and the Followers of Wickliff here in England, held the same. But Argument is the best Authority; and 'tis thus argued, that he is the great Antichrist.— 'Tis granted that the *ὁ ἀντιχριστός*, the Adversary, that exalts himself against, and in the Seat of God, is the same with this *ἀντιχριστός*, or Antichrist, Christ's Vicar, or rather his Rival in the World. But this Man of Sin, this Son of Perdition, if any where in the World, is to be found at Rome, all the Marks the Holy Spirit gives, exactly agreeing:— The Man of Sin exalts himself above all that's called God;— so does the Pope,— above Kings and Emperors, earthly Gods:— Against the God of Heaven, dispensing with his Laws, and setting up others in their room.— The Man of Sin sits in the Temple of God, shewing, or making Ostentation of himself, that he is God:— So, to a title, does the Pope, who is plac'd upon the holy Altar, and solemnly ador'd; nay, whom they call Our Lord God the Pope.— There was something which did let, in the Apostles time, why this Man of Sin shou'd not immediately appear in the World; and something which must be remov'd, or taken out of the way, before it cou'd be done; and something which, for some Reason or other, the Apostles thought not fit more plainly to mention.— All which is interpreted by the ancient Fathers themselves, of the Roman Power and Empire: This Empire is now taken away,— that which succeeds in its room, and whose Power was hinder'd from appearing while that remain'd, must be Antichrist:— This belongs, without dispute, to the Pope, therefore he is Antichrist.— Again,— the Man of Sin, or Antichrist, is to come after the working of Satan, with Signs and lying Wonders: So does the Pope.— The Prophecy in 1 Tim. 4. is as plain:— The Apostates of the latter Days are the Followers of Antichrist:— they, as God's Spirit tells us, shall give heed to seducing Spirits, and Doctrines of Devils; shall forbid to marry, and command to abstain from Meats, &c. This have the Papists done more eminently than ever any other. We cou'd add more Arguments from the Revelations, but desire first (though we never expect) to see these answer'd; but will leave it here, after we have precluded an Objection or two, which make a greater noise, because of the Persons who rais'd 'em, than from any thing of weight they have in themselves. All who are set up against the Pope, to excuse him from being intended in these Prophecies, are Simon Magus, Caligula and Mahomet.— But neither of these can be here pointed at, therefore the former must e'en keep his place. Not Caligula or Simon Magus, because both reveal'd, or appearing in the World, before this Epistle and Prophecy was written: Not Mahomet, who stands fairest for the Title, next its true Owner,— because he came not with Deceivableness, nor was there any Mystery in his Iniquity; it being open, and bare-fac'd: Nor is he worshipp'd as God, only as his great Prophet: Nor does he forbid to marry, nor Meats, though he does Wine: Nor was his Seat at Rome, which is Babylon.

Quest. 6. Whether Aaron receiv'd the Ear-rings and Bracelets of the Children of Israel, and made the Calf of them, of real Gold? By what means did Moses burn it, and reduce it to Ashes?

Ans. 'Tis not said in any Translation that we e'er yet saw, that the Calf was reduced to Ashes: It was indeed burnt, or thrown into the Fire, and melted out of that form and shape whereunto Aaron had reduced it;— and then, as our Translation has it, stamp'd to Powder; that is, ground or filed it as small as possible, and so strewed upon the Water; whereas the Jews say, by the drinking thereof, the Bellies of those who had been guilty of Idolatry immediately swell'd, and their Faces were discolour'd, much as in the Case of the Waters of Jealousie, and thereby were discover'd to the Levites. The Hebrew makes it plain, *וַיִּטְחֵן עַד אֶשְׁרָן* *Ac moluit usque quo comminuit.* The Septuagint much to the same purpose, *καταλάσων αὐτὸν λεπτόν*,— *Contrivit eum minutim*,— *Ground it very small.* The Syriack Version,— *Limavit eum Limâ, quoad comminutus esset, quasi pulvis*,— *Filed it with a File, till it was made as small as Dust.*— The Targum of Onkelos follows the Hebrew, and the Arabick the Syriack. If in the whole we consider the Sense in which that proverbial Speech,— *Beating to Dust, or Powder*, is taken,

taken, there will be no manner of difficulty in the place.

Quest. 6. Whether Ahasuerus in Sacred Writ, were the same with Xerxes in Profane History?

Ans. We rather believe him the same with Artaxerxes, who succeeded Xerxes. Our Reasons are, because Josephus, who should best understand the History of his own Country, affirms it; or rather takes it for granted, as a thing wholly uncontested, because the Septuagint, of great Antiquity and Authority, confirms the same, as well as the Latin Version; because Ahasuerus and Artaxerxes are of the same, or very near signification; Ahas being as much as Great, — Rosh, as Head or Chief. Thus Art, in the Persian Language, also signifies Great, being a common Prefix amongst 'em, as Herodotus tells us; and we find in those words, — Artabanes, Artavastus, &c. and Xerxes much the same with Rosh. This Artaxerxes rul'd from Judea to Ethiopia, or Cush; he liv'd at Susa, or Shushan; — he reign'd in Peace: All which belong to Ahasuerus, and hardly to any other of the Kings of Persia, who are assign'd in his room. We find also, he made use of the Council of seven Princes; which Establishment was not in that Empire, till the time of Darius: From whence 'tis plain, that neither Cyrus nor Cambyses could be this Ahasuerus: Nor could it be Darius, who never was divorc'd, but left his Wife Atossa behind him in great Honour: — Nor Xerxes, because he was engag'd in Wars, and always unhappy. All the difficulty is, How could Mordecai live to the Time of this Artaxerxes? But if we suppose him to be carried into Captivity at Ten Years old, and to have been very aged when these things happen'd, that Objection will easily vanish.

Quest. 7. Whence comes it that there's so great a difference between the holy Scriptures and profane History, in the Names of the Kings of Egypt, Babel, and other Countries; which seems the stranger, because some of those Names are the same in both Histories, as Darius, Cyrus and Artaxerxes?

Ans. For the sacred Histories, we are sure they are true, and consequently, if there should be any irreconcilable difference between them and others, the latter must be mistaken. But considering the great distance of Time, the difference of Pronunciation between the Hebrew and other Languages, the uncertainty of profane Historians, who disagree as much between themselves, as with the Scriptures, and are, at best, but Fragments, we rather ought to wonder there should be so many Names alike, than perhaps more which disagree. Instance of the difference of Names we have in the Question just before mention'd, there being one thing more which increases the Confusion, which is, the same Names being given to a whole Succession; as Pharaoh to the Egyptians, and Artaxerxes to the Persians, as Diodorus Siculus informs us.

Quest. 8. How comes it to pass that Cain's Damnation is so avouch'd by some Men?

Ans. We confess, there are few Judgments of that nature which we do not think rashly made, such secret things belonging to God. — But yet, if ever one might venture to pass a Sentence, it might be, one would think, in the Case of Cain and Judas; both of whom, some think it uncharitable for us absolutely to pronounce among the Damned: But whatever their Judgments may be in these Cases, particularly that of Cain, we think it, at least, among things most highly probable, that he is of that Number; both because he went out from the Presence of the Lord, — the Communion of his Church, in his Father's Family, whither, that we know of, he never return'd; — and because of what is said of those Reprobates, St. Jude mentions, — who had gone in the Way of Cain, and perish'd in the Gainsaying of Core.

Quest. 9. How shall a Person of an ordinary Capacity be thoroughly satisfy'd, that the Bible that is now us'd in this Kingdom, is the same that was written by the Apostles and Prophets, as they were inspired by the Spirit of God; that it now carries the same Sense in the Literal Understanding, or that 'tis the very Word of God?

Ans. No rational Man makes doubt of any Matter of Fact, which has all the Evidences for it that the nature of the thing will bear: And this Evidence every honest Man has, let him be never so unlearned, that those Writings we now have agree, as to the main, with the Originals. He has the uncontrold Attestation of all Ages and Places, delivering the very Originals down to us, which learned and honest Men have translated into our own, as well as others into almost all other Languages. He may now have also the Testimony of Persons of the same Character, that our Version agrees with these Originals. — This is as good, and much better Evi-

dence, than a Man has for his own Estate; or than is admitted in Courts of Judicature to determine, either in matter of Right and Wrong, or Life and Death. That the holy Scriptures are the Word of God, and the same which were written by inspired Men, and consequently have the same Sense for the main, that they had when first committed to Writing, and that Sense, in what is necessary for Salvation, plain, and easy to be understood, any Person of an ordinary Capacity may fairly argue, since 'tis agreeable to the Nature of God to give his Creatures some Directions or other in the Way to Heaven. This bare Tradition, or Reason, are too weak to perform. This no other Writings can pretend to; and this, the same Goodness which gave it, is oblig'd to preserve it from any essential Alteration.

Quest. 10. What Credit is to be given to the account of Singing Psalms in the Air at Cevennes and other places in France, during the heat of the Persecution, — as related by Monsieur Jurieu in his Pastoral Letters?

Ans. Our Opinion is, if the Fact be true, that 'twas only the Echo of some Voices singing in the hollows of the Mountains, where the poor Protestants might be got together at their Devotions, which by the particular Situation of the place, and perhaps the assistance of the Wind, might be heard at so great a distance, — we hope none will take this Opinion of ours in ill part, since it becomes such as would search after Truth, not to be too credulous in the belief of such things as seem visibly to surpass the ordinary Powers of nature.

Quest. 11. What was the greatest Sin in the World before the Flood?

Ans. The learned and judicious Sir Walter Rawleigh thinks it was Cruelty: And indeed, that may seem to be more particularly provided against by God, at the Re-peopleing of the World by the Sons of Noah, who, for that End, were forbidden to eat Blood. 'Tis true that we read in several places, before the Flood came upon the Earth, that the whole Earth was fill'd with Violence; and for that Reason God says, he would destroy all Flesh. But this Violence is not determin'd to Cruelty and Murders only, since it may refer as much to Rapes, Robberies, and all sorts of Injustice, committed with a strong Hand, all the World over. If we may be permitt'd to add our Judgment, we are inclin'd to think it was not one single Sin, so much as a Complication of Sins, and that universally practis'd, for which the World was destroy'd, (though, undoubtedly, those mention'd might go a great way amongst the rest.) For thus says God's Spirit, — "Every Imagination of Man's Heart was only evil. — And again, — "The Earth was corrupt, and all Flesh had corrupted his Way.

Quest. 12. From whence came first the Superstition of Abstaining from Flesh? Or where had it its Original?

Ans. 'Tis a Question not easy, perhaps impossible, to be decided, whether ever Flesh was eaten before the Flood; — though some think the Negative more probable, because, as they observe, all the Herbs of the Field, and Fruit of the Trees were given to Adam to eat, but no mention at all made of any Permission he had to eat Flesh; whereas this Permission is expressly given to Noah, at his Coming out of the Ark; and to what End, one would think, if he and all Mankind had it before; — nay, and that with a seeming reference to the first Food. — "Every moving thing that liveth shall be Meat for you; even as the green Herb, "have I given you all things. However, there have been, from those first Ages, some Persons who, desiring to be thought more mortified and holy than the rest of Mankind, have either altogether, or at least in publick, abstain'd from Flesh. 'Tis hard to track the very Beginning of this Pancy, but as high as Pythagoras we can go with it; and the Reason of his Abstinence is known to be his Opinion concerning Transmigration, not daring to eat Flesh, lest he should happen to swallow a piece of his Great-Grandfather. 'Tis a Question whether the Jewish Essenes had the same Opinion from him, or be not rather from them. A famous Sect in the Indies are at this Day of the same Mind; and some Religious among the Papists, (as well as the mad Turkish Devils,) say, all the Roman Catholics, as 'tis known, on certain Times and Days, — as was long before prepos'd of 'em, — 1 Tim. 4. 3. "Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from Meats; which God had created, "to be receiv'd with Thanksgiving. — Though they are not much hurt by't, considering how they make it up, in the richest Fish, and the noblest Wines.

F I N I S.

LONDON, Printed for J. Dunton, 1691.